THE LADDER

December 1960

purpose of the

Daughters of BILITIS

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

1. Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications--this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.

2. Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.

3. Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.

4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

the Ladder

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THE LADDER is regarded as a sounding board for various points of view on the homophile and related subjects and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the organization.

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COVER BY KATHY ROGERS

In the Twilight

by Marcel Proust

Translated by Abigail Sanford

Original title: AVANT LA NUIT. "Revue blanche," December, 1893, pp. 381-385.

"Even though I am fairly well again, you know," she said to me with intimate gentleness (as one softens by one's tone anything harsh that must be said to those one loves), "you know that I might die any day - just as I may quite well live several months. So I cannot put off any longer revealing to you something that weighs on my mind; you will understand afterwards how painful it is for me to tell you." Her eyes, symbolic blue flowers, lost color as if they were fading. I thought she was going to cry, but she did not. "It grieves me to destroy deliberately the hope of being respected after my death by my best friend; to tarnish, even break, the image that he has had of me, and upon which I have often patterned my real life, to make it more harmonious and comely. But care for an 'artistic arrangement,' (she smiled as she uttered the label with that slight ironic exaggeration she always gave to words of this sort, so rare in her conversation) "cannot check a compulsive need for honesty which forces me to speak.

"Listen, Leslie: I simply have to tell you. But first give me my coat. It is growing a bit cool here on the terrace and the doctor has forbidden my getting up if it isn't necessary." I gave her the coat. The sun had set, and the ocean visible through the apple trees was mauve. Fragile as pale wilted wreaths (and persistent as regrets) small blue and pink clouds floated at the horizon. A somber aisle of poplars stood half in shadow, their tops like a rose-window; the last rays of sunset, not reaching the trunks, touched the branches above these pillars of shadow with garlands of rosy light. The breeze carried mingled scents of sea, wet leaves, and milk. Never had the Norman countryside more seductively softened the melancholy of evening, but I hardly sensed it, I was so much disturbed by the mysterious words of my friend.

"I have loved you well, but I have given you very little, my friend," she said.

"Forgive me, Francoise, if in violation of the rules of this literary game I interrupt a 'confession' to which I should listen in silence," I cried, attempting to calm her by the lighter touch. Actually I was mortally sad. "How do you mean, you have given me little? On the contrary, you have given me more than I asked, indeed much more than if there had been passion in our fondness. Remote as a madonna...gentle as a nurse...I have adored you, you have...cradled my spirit. I have loved you with a delicate warmth undisturbed by any expectation of carnal pleasure. And in exchange you have given me an incomparable friendship, spontaneously brilliant conversation, exquisite tea, and how many bouquets of fresh roses! You alone have known how to cool my feverish head, how to slip honey between my fainting lips; you have filled my life with inspiring images. Dear friend, I don't want to hear this absurd confession. Give me your hands to kiss. It's growing cold - let us go inside and talk of something else."

"Leslie, my poor boy, you'll just have to hear me out. It's an obsession. Have you never asked yourself whether, widowed as I was at twenty, I have remained..."

"I am sure of it, but it doesn't concern me. You are a person so superior to all others that a weakness of yours would have a quality of nobility and beauty lacking in the virtues of others. You have done what you thought best, and I am certain that has never been other than delicate and pure."

"Pure!...Leslie, your confidence desolates me - a reproach before the event. Listen...I don't know how to tell you this... It is worse than if I had been your lover, or even someone else's - or indeed just anyone's at all."

I turned white as a sheet - white as she was, alas - and trembling lest she notice this, I tried to laugh and brought out, hardly knowing what I was saying, "Just anyone's at all? What an odd thing to say..."

"I said worse, Leslie, but I don't really know, even in

my brightest hours. At night one should see everything more calmly, but I can't see this thing clearly, and there are some enormous shadows on my past. But if in the depths of my conscience I don't believe this is worse, why am I ashamed to tell? Was it worse?"

I did not understand her, but seized by acute agitation impossible to conceal, I began to tremble as if in a nightmare. I did not dare look down that path opening before us, now full of darkness and terror, nor could I close my eyes to it. Her voice, which had grown lower and had broken with deeper and deeper sorrow, suddenly steadied, and in a tone quite clear and normal she said: "You remember when my poor friend Dorothy was caught with that (woman) singer whose name I have forgotten" (I was happy at this change of subject, which I hoped would side-track us from the recital of her own troubles), "how you explained to me then that we ought not to judge her harshly. I can recall your very words: 'How can we condemn habits which Socrates, (that concerned men, of course, but isn't it the same thing?) Socrates who drank the hemlock rather than commit an injustice, cheerfully sanctioned among his close friends? Though fertile love, destined to keep the race alive, approved as a noble duty to family, society, and humanity, is superior to purely sensual passion, on the other hand there are no gradations among sterile loves, and it is not any less moral - or rather not more immoral - for a woman to find pleasure with another woman than with someone of the other sex. The cause of such preference lies in the nervous system, too exclusively to involve any moral significance. One can't say because most people call red objects red, that those who see them as violet are wrong.

"'And anyhow,' you added, 'if one refines passion in order to make it more esthetic, then since women's bodies and men's can be equally beautiful, one can't see why artistic women shouldn't fall in love with another woman. Among real artists physical attraction or repulsion is governed by regard for beauty. Most people recoil in disgust from jelly-fish. But Michelet, aware of the delicacy of their colors, collected them for pleasure. And in spite of my own initial dislike of oysters, after I had thought about their long journeys in the sea,' (you told me that, too) 'which their flavor now evokes for me,

they have become, especially when I am far inland, a feast of reminiscence. Just so our physical preferences - our pleasure in touch, in taste, in sensual experience - remain grafted where our love of beauty first took root.' Don't you think those arguments could help a woman physically predisposed to this sort of love to become conscious of a vague curiosity, if certain statues of Rodin's, for example, overcame - artistically - her repugnance? That they might excuse her in her own eyes, quiet her conscience...and that it could be a great misfortune?"

I do not know how I kept from crying out: the meaning of her confession, the hard light it threwupon my own awful responsibility, was instantly apparent. But letting myself be blindly guided by one of those high inspirations which, when we are too crushed, too inadequate to play our roles, suddenly takes over and plays it for us, I said calmly: "I assure you I feel no remorse, for I really neither condemn nor even pity such women."

She said cryptically, with infinitely sweet gratitude, "You are generous." She added quickly in a low voice, with an air almost of boredom, as one who scorns even while giving matter-of-fact details, "You know well that I've just given an account of myself, despite your air of suspecting nothing; that the shot which no one could extract, and which is the cause of my illness, you have probed for with a sincerity that got it out of me. I hoped no one would ever learn what that shot was. But since the doctor seems so certain now (of my death) - and since you might suspect some innocent person of being responsible - I admit it. But I would rather tell you the whole truth." She added, with that softness she had used at the beginning in talking of her approaching death, to allay the pain of what she said by her manner of saying it: "It was I, in one of those moments of despair which are only natural to all who live - I who...wounded myself."

I wanted to embrace her, but had all I could do to maintain self-control; as I reached her side, an irresistible tide overwhelmed me, my eyes overflowed and I burst into sobs. At once she dried my tears, smiling little, consoled me quietly as she had done before with a thousand small caresses. But within her an immense pity for herself and

for me weighed on her, rose to her eyes, and at last ran down in burning tears. We wept together, in a vast and tragic understanding. Our confused pity now had an object larger than our separate selves and we wept for it freely and willingly. I tried to kiss the tears from her hands, but others continued to fall till she was chilled by their wetness. Her hand was as cold as the pale leaves fallen into the fountain. And never had we felt such pain or such comfort.

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TO DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS
165 O'Farrell Street -- Room 405
San Francisco 2, California

Locust - Years

A Story by Jay Wallace

"I believe I have made an important decision," Marion said. "Last night, late, I sat up thinking about it; then I composed a letter to my son and his wife, accepting their gracious hospitality."

The younger woman shrugged. "If you feel that's what you want, Marion, then I suppose it is the best thing for you." She twisted suddenly in the deep, comfortable chair where she was sprawled, blue-denimed legs stretched out before her. "But I dunno, somehow you just don't strike me as the 'Grandmother' type."

Marion laughed softly. The wrinkles on either side of her warm brown eyes deepened. "Well, I am a grandmother, Connie. Nothing on earth can change that fact."

"I'm not trying to change facts, Marion," the younger woman said. "It's great to be a grandmother...I suppose; but it's just that you don't act like one; at least, not around here. You don't. All the gay kids know you, and we all like you a lot. You're one of us."

"And I like all you kids a lot, too," she replied. "But, my dear, there must be at least twenty to twenty-five years difference between most of you youngsters and me."

Connie inhaled deeply on her cigarette, then stomped it out in the large ceramic ashtray at her elbow. "Age doesn't make any difference, not in our 'life,'" she said. "Maybe you didn't find out about...us until you were married, or something. After all, you have a grown son."

Marion nodded. "A grown son and a grown daughter, too. Yes, you're right about me, Connie. I just didn't know the facts until it was too late; then, well...I had my son by the time I had myself figured out, the inside-me, that is; and I just couldn't walk away. My little girl was born soon after that. I knew something was missing in my marriage - something subtle, evasive; at first, I didn't

know what it was. Then, quite by chance, I happened to meet somebody - a...a woman, like us, Connie. But by that time..." Marion sighed deeply. "I turned my back on her and on the type of life she represented. But I always thought that if it hadn't been for the children..." Marion didn't complete her sentence.

"You see?" Connie replied, straightening out and leaning forward. "You never had a chance."

Marion smiled; her eyes were deep and glowing with memories. "I had," she said softly, "but it came too late."

"Okay, so that's over and past," Connie said in her practical manner. "You'll get another chance someday - maybe soon..."

Marion shook her head, sighing deeply. "No, my dear. I'm much too old for that romantic, dreamy existence now. Maybe right after my husband died; maybe fifteen or even ten years ago, but not now. Not now." She laughed softly. "I'm a grandmother, Connie, complete with three little grandchildren who love me dearly."

Connie was silent a moment, then she said, "Going to live the part, huh?"

Marion smiled, then chuckled. "I have to! It's the part that Life has presented to me, Connie."

The younger woman leaned back in the comfortable chair again. "Life presents us with many 'parts,' Marion. I think that we ourselves select the one that we wish to portray."

Marion stared at her without replying.

"For instance," Connie said, "Life also presented you with a...a Lesbian 'part' too, didn't She?"

Marion nodded and said, "Well, yes, but..."

"So," the younger woman continued, "you deliberately select the old granny 'part' to play, ignoring the juicy role of Lesbian, which is also yours, and which you

probably could do a whole lot better."

Marion's laughter rang out merrily. "My dear little Connie, you make me sound like a siren!"

"Well, you could be just that...to the right person."

Marion laughed again, but Connie's blonde brows were drawn together thoughtfully.

"You never met the right person at the right time," Connie said. "Perhaps before this it was too soon, I grant you that; but now is the perfect time, and you're running away...to be an old granny."

Marion sighed. "Perhaps it is the right time for me to be an 'old granny,' as you put it. I've been living alone for many years, Connie. My husband died a long time ago, and I've never met anyone else. I'm...I'm what you might called 'tired,' I suppose. Tired of being alone, of waiting, of watching other couples. Being an old granny won't be half as difficult. I'll have John, and Gloria, and the children. Perhaps I won't be ecstatically happy, but I'll be content."

"...and old!" Connie replied.

"Well," Marion said, "I'm afraid I can't become young again." There was a soft glow in her dark eyes as she studied the face of the younger woman. She liked Connie, liked her spirit, her determination, her vital bubbling courage.

After a short silence Connie asked, "What's your son's place like, anyway, Marion?"

The older woman brightened. "Oh, it's just charming, Connie. It's a small cottage in the suburbs, surrounded by a lovely garden, with trees, and flowers, and fresh air that's not contaminated by city soot."

"Sounds okay. Do you have your own room when you go there?"

"Oh, yes," Marion replied. "I have my own private little room, with three big windows opening right off the rose

garden. That's where I'll stay when I live there. It's really a charming room, Connie. Not as large as my apartment here, naturally, but cozy."

Connie rose sighing and started toward the door. "Yeah, well, I d better get up to my own place. I promised Elaine I'd help clean dish closets this evening. I hope you'll say 'goodbye' before you leave."

"Of course, my dear," Marion agreed. "I won't be leaving for another day or two. I want to get there in time for the holidays."

At the door Connie turned, smiling. "About that cozy little room," she said, "does it have an old rocking chair in one corner?"

Marion sat for many moments staring at the closed door through which Connie had disappeared.

* * * * *

The holiday music, the carols, and the lively little jingles had started early this year, Marion thought. The radio was on, and she was listening while she packed. She had spread her three suitcases out on the floor and beside them she had placed a large cardboard carton. And she was busy sorting out her clothes, arranging them into two categories: Future things, which went into the suitcases, and Past things, which went into the cardboard carton. Future things included such articles as comfortable shoes, slippers, sweaters, and house dresses; Past things were fewer, a pair of red, high-heeled pumps, a low-cut gown, some black lace underwear, a pale blue diaphanous nightgown, and a sophisticated hostess outfit, silver and black, that she never had the nerve to wear. When she had finished, she closed the suitcases and stood them by the door. The cardboard carton she placed back in the closet. She would give that to someone, she thought. Someone like Elaine, someone who could use such finery. Someone young, like Elaine.

Marion walked to the spacious window, raised the blind, and looked out. A wet snow had begun to fall over Manhattan, shellacking the streets, and making black mirrors

out of them, from which were reflected the gleaming red and green traffic lights, and the neon lights of bars. While she watched, the sweeping blue-white arc of the Empire State searchlight swung overhead; and from the nearby river came the low moan of a tugboat, groping its way through the swirl of wet snow.

I will miss all of this, Marion thought. All the excitement of New York, the bigness, the new faces, new things; and I will surely miss my friends, Connie, Elaine, and all the others. But I will have new friends, she thought. And I will have my family around me; and instead of big city sights I will have the stars, and the rose garden, and the rhythm of the crickets, which I always loved as a child. She smiled to herself, allowing her mind to wander through these memories; then suddenly she remembered something else; she felt again the slow pain of loneliness when surrounded by beauty. She remembered how far away the white stars seem to one alone; and how the chirping of the crickets sounded a trifle melancholy; and how the white swirling snow settling on the dark pines had made her weep, one time, long ago, drawing the tears out of her from the deep emptiness inside, where her aloneness had gathered in one hard, aching lump. She recalled, too, that at the time she had not been alone. She had been visiting her son, and she was surrounded by people, by warmth, and by love; but even this could not melt the ice of this loneliness. For only belonging can do that, she thought. People can't do it; things can't do it; only belonging can do it. The right person, the right place, the right love. She dropped the blind hastily, and turned, shaking herself mentally and walked back into the center of the room.

It was at that moment that the idea came to her; perhaps her memories did it - Marion couldn't tell - but she thought the idea to be a good one. One last fling, she thought. I will have a little alone-party, by myself, to celebrate my long, lonely city days, as a fitting end to all the youthful endeavors, as an end to youth itself. I will be a lonely Lesbian for one last time, before I turn into a comfortable grandmother; a glam-

(Continued on Page 18)

mood miscellanea

LISTEN, MR. BOOK BANNER — AN IDEA SPEAKS

I'M HOMELESS AND ALONE;
I'M A LUXURY; YOU CAN'T AFFORD ME.
TIME WAS WHEN I WAS WELCOME.
— TIMES HAVE CHANGED.

NO LONGER AM I SOUGHT AFTER;
STILL, I'M RECOGNIZED,
LEGISLATED AGAINST.
THEY SEEK TO CRUSH ME, THE MOB
— CALLED MAJORITY.

MY SIDES ACHE WITH LAUGHTER.
THEY WANT TO DESTROY ME. TO DO SO
THEY MUST DESTROY THEMSELVES.
FOR I EXIST
— ONLY IN THEIR MINDS.

ANONYMOUS

NIGHT SONG

IN THE STILLY, STILLY NIGHT
WHEN EVERYTHING IS SPENT,
I RUFFLE HER HAIR AND KISS HER NOSE,
UNTANGLE OUR FINGERS, DITTO OUR TOES,
BEFORE OUR EYES CLOSE TIGHT
IN THE STILLY, STILLY NIGHT.

BEFORE OUR EYES CLOSE TIGHT,
WHEN EVERYTHING IS SPENT,
WE LIE LIKE SPOONS IN BED
FOOT TO FOOT AND HEAD TO HEAD,
COOL UNDER PALE STARLIGHT
BEFORE OUR EYES CLOSE TIGHT.

JACQUELINE LAWSON

THE VILLAGE GAY STREETS

IT'S WHERE THE SUN SIGNS TO THE CROWD,
IT'S WHERE THE NIGHT OFFERS HER PEACE.
IT'S WHERE THE HEART OF LOVE CALLS OUT
IN VAIN TO SOOTHE THE SULLEN STREETS.

I'VE SEEN THEM TRIMMED WITH SORTED FOLK,
WITH CRIMINALS OF EVERY TYPE,
WITH THIEVES AND PIMPS, PEDDLING DOPE
AND DRINKING BY SOME CLOUDY LIGHT.

I'VE SEEN THE VERY LONELY ONES
CROUCHED IN A CORNER WITH A GLASS.
I'VE SEEN THE HARD AND BITTER SCUM,
A DRUNKEN BULK OF UGLY MASS.

AND AT A TABLE HERE AND THERE,
BEHIND A SOFT WAX CANDLE LIGHT,
I'VE SEEN THOSE TURNED FROM EVERYWHERE--
THE HOMOSEXUALS OF LIFE.

'TIS PITY THEY'VE NO PLACE TO GO
WHERE PEOPLE WON'T OBJECT AND STARE
EXCEPT A STRING OF STREETS THAT KNOW
THE DEPTHS OF CRIME, THE LOST, THE SCARRED.

VERONICA COS

POETIC INVERSION

DID YOU KNOW?
THAT STEWS HAVE FLOWERS?
THAT SHOWERS HAVE SPRINGS?
THAT WINGS HAVE BIRDS?
THAT WORDS HAVE SONGS?
THAT WRONGS HAVE RIGHTS?
DO YOU KNOW?

DIANA STERLING

The Life and Death of a Lesbian Novel

By Theodora

THE MANUSCRIPT WAS FINISHED AND TYPED AND SENT OFF TO AN AGENT BY THE FIRST OF JULY, 1959. THIS WAS LIKE SENDING IT INTO A BOTTOMLESS PIT, AND ABOUT THE TIME I THOUGHT IT MUST BE GONE FOREVER, AROUND THE FIRST OF OCTOBER, CAME THE GOOD NEWS. A HARDBACK PUBLISHER WAS CONSIDERING PUBLISHING MY BOOK. TRUE, IT WAS ONE OF THE SMALLER HOUSES, STRUGGLING AND NOT VERY OLD, BUT LEGITIMATE AND REPUTABLE. TO SAY I WAS HAPPY IS INADEQUATE. THEN SILENCE. NO NEWS UNTIL EARLY SPRING, 1960.

"THERE HAVE BEEN SOME DELAYS," CAME THE WORD. THEN IN LATE SPRING, THE FINAL NEWS - NO SALE, BOOK REFUSED. MY AGENT SAID, "WAIT A WHILE. I'LL TRY OTHER HOUSES. BOOKS OFTEN KICK AROUND FOR YEARS BEFORE FINDING THE RIGHT PUBLISHER."

THEN HE WROTE TO ME LESS THAN A MONTH LATER. "I'VE HAD AN OFFER FROM ONE OF THE WORST PAPERBACK HOUSES. THEY'LL DO THE BOOK, BUT WANT CARTE BLANCHE ON REWRITING IT FIRST, AND THEIR CONTRACT IS VERY POOR. YOU'LL HAVE TO SELL YOUR RIGHTS TO THE BOOK COMPLETELY."

I WROTE BACK AND ASKED, "WHAT KIND OF REWRITING?"

"NOT MUCH," WAS THE REPLY. JUST A LITTLE EDITORIAL CHANGE. BUT IF I WERE YOU, I'D HOLD OFF FOR A BETTER DEAL. THIS BOOK CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS PUBLISHER."

I WROTE BACK THE SAME DAY. "NO! GO AHEAD AND SELL IT. I'LL SIGN THE CONTRACT."

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF SEPTEMBER, 1960, I FOUND MY BOOK ON A LOCAL NEWSSTAND. IT HAD A HIDEOUS COVER (I HAD EXPECTED THAT) AND A FOOLISH AUTHOR'S NAME WHICH I HAD AGREED TO USE, AND A TITLE TOTALLY UNRELATED TO THE STORY AND UTTERLY DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE

I'D GIVEN IT. THESE WEREN'T MUCH, THOUGH, I THOUGHT. BUT THIS WAS JUST THE BEGINNING. INSIDE THE BOOK WAS AN INTERESTING BIOGRAPHY OF MY LIFE WHOLLY UNRELATED TO THE TRUTH. THIS WAS OKAY, FOR I HAD WANTED TO BE ANONYMOUS. BUT WHY SUCH BIG POINTLESS LIES?

STILL I SHRUGGED AT THIS DECEPTION AND SETTLED DOWN TO READ MY BOOK. BY THE END OF THE FIRST CHAPTER I REALIZED THAT THOSE LITTLE EDITORIAL CHANGES WERE PRETTY BIG INDEED, AND BY THE TIME I HAD FINISHED THE BOOK I WAS PRETTY SICK. "THOSE CHANGES" AMOUNTED TO ALMOST COMPLETELY REWRITING A SORT OF HAPPY SLICKENING OF THE TEXT, A GENERAL DEMORALIZATION OF ALL THE MAIN CHARACTERS, A FEW FACTUAL CHANGES, MINOR DELETIONS (ABOUT 1/3 OF THE BOOK) AND VARIOUS OTHER COMFORTING REVISIONS.

WHEN I PERSONALLY BEGAN TO RECOVER FROM THE SHOCK, MY FRIENDS' AND CRITICS' SHOCKED REACTIONS BEGAN COMING IN. "HOW COULD YOU?" THEY ALL CRIED, OR WORDS TO THAT EFFECT. AND THE OTHER APPROACH, "CHEER UP, OLD GIRL. DON'T KILL YOURSELF. IT ISN'T QUITE THAT BAD. NEEDLESS TO SAY, I PREFER THE FIRST REACTION.

NOW HOW TO PROTEST? AFTER ALL, I WROTE IT, I SOLD IT, AND PERHAPS MOST FOOLISHLY, I ADMITTED WRITING IT. NATURALLY IF I HAD TO DO THIS ALL AGAIN, I WOULD NOT SELL TO THE COMPANY AT ALL. I'M WRITING THIS FOR THE LADDER BECAUSE I HOPE THOSE OTHERS AMONG YOU, LIKE MYSELF, WHO HOPE TO WRITE PROFESSIONALLY AND PERHAPS FURTHER OUR GENERAL CAUSE, CAN PROFIT FROM MY SAD EXPERIENCE AND HAVE BETTER FORTUNE.

HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTED RULES TO FOLLOW:

1. TRUST YOUR AGENT; HE KNOWS MORE THAN YOU DO ABOUT HIS BUSINESS.

2. STAY SHY OF THE PAPERBACK HOUSES, PARTICULARLY THE POORER QUALITY ONES. (THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO ANY OF THE FAWCETT LINES; THEY ARE TRUSTWORTHY.)

3. BE PATIENT. BE WILLING TO WAIT TO BE PUBLISHED.

4. DON'T SIGN UNREASONABLY STRICT CONTRACTS NOR SIGN AWAY ALL YOUR RIGHTS TO YOUR WORK, IF YOU CAN POSSIBLY AVOID IT.

(Continued from page 13)

orous Lesbian, she thought, the siren that Connie wants me to be.

Smiling to herself, like a mischievous child, she made her preparations. She put on the silver and black hostess coat, made up her face, and as an extra little touch, she mixed herself a cocktail from the well-stocked liquor cabinet. She felt young and excited as she stepped back, surveying her reflection in the wide mirror, looking for the old Marion Taylor. She couldn't find her. Then suddenly, she was reminded of some words that she had heard long ago - how long ago, somewhere, sometime; words that went something like: "I will restore to thee the years that the locusts hath eaten..." Restored years, Marion thought. Locust-years, restored all in one evening. But then, she thought, time is relative. Perhaps the locust-eaten years can be restored. Perhaps. It was while she was thinking this that she heard the doorbell. She had one wild moment of panic; then calmly, she walked to the door and opened it.

"Oh, hi, "Connie said. "I was wondering if you were still up." Then she backed away, slightly wide-eyed, and whistled softly. "Expecting company?" she asked.

"No," Marion replied. "I'm just enjoying my last fling in New York. Sort of a farewell party for Marion Taylor."

"Well!" Connie retorted. "You sure did it up right." Then she added, "I've got a surprise for you, Marion. I want you to meet my kid-sister."

Marion nodded, smiling. "Why, certainly, my dear, I would love to."

Connie strode into the room pulling someone after her.

Marion stared at the tall, masculine woman with the short, iron-grey hair. Then the woman laughed, "It's a family joke," she explained. "I'm really Connie's

half-sister, quite a bit older, but she always has called me by that nickname."

"I've been wanting to get Jo to Manhattan for the longest time, Connie said. "Finally she arrived just this evening for the holidays."

Marion nodded, looked at the woman and smiled, and Jo returned her smile. And there was a warmth in the room suddenly, a depth, a beauty, a feeling that was almost tangible; something vital and dazzling that surrounded her, and made her feel glowing inside, excited and joyously alive, and yet, at the same time, something that was deep and comforting and strong.

Then Marion said, "I'm so happy that you finally arrived. Would you care for a cocktail? I was just having one."

Jo nodded, still smiling. "I'd love a cocktail," she replied. Then she added softly, "I'm happy that I finally arrived, too."

* * * * *

It was past midnight. The wet snow was still falling, gathering itself into white patches here and there, on low rooftops and in secluded places. Marion Taylor went to her writing desk, brought out her stationery and pen. She began composing a letter, writing rapidly, joyously. Then she read it over to herself, whispering the words aloud, "Dear John and Gloria," she had written, "Thank you so much for your kind invitation, but I feel that I must decline. I belong here in New York. I am at home here. However, I would love to visit you over the holidays, see you and the children."

Then she added a postscript: "If you wouldn't mind too much, I'd love to bring along a friend of mine. She's wonderful, and I'm sure you'll like her."

She signed it, and sealed it, and placed it on the hall table near the entrance so that she would be sure to remember to mail it when she went out later.

Here and There

THERE IS TO BE A BIOGRAPHY OF RADCLYFFE HALL PUBLISHED SOON IN ENGLAND. THIS IS NO PIPEDREAM - IT IS ALREADY WRITTEN, AND BY A FAMOUS WRITER.

* * * * *

A NOTE ON REVERSE PROCEDURE. IT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR A HARDBACK BOOK TO BE REPRINTED AS A PAPERBACK, BUT THE REVERSE IS A LITTLE UNUSUAL. CANADIANS AND ENGLISH FRIENDS OF THE LADDER WILL BE INTERESTED TO HEAR THAT TWO OF VALERIE TAYLOR'S PAPERBACK ORIGINALS (IN THIS COUNTRY), WHISPER THEIR LOVE AND STRANGER ON LESBOS, ARE AVAILABLE IN CANADA FROM TORONTO PUBLISHER BURNS & MACEACHERN AND IN ENGLAND FROM NEVILLE SPEARMAN, LONDON PUBLISHER. BOTH OF THESE REPRINTS ARE IN HARDCOVER.

* * * * *

BLARING HEADLINES IN THE SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER OF OCTOBER 17TH REVEAL THAT "CHIEF THOMAS CAHILL HAS QUIETLY REORGANIZED THE POLICE SEX DETAIL FOR AN ATTACK ON SAN FRANCISCO'S HOMOSEXUAL PROBLEM AND ARRESTS HAVE QUADRUPLED."

"THIS IS NOT HARRASSMENT," SAID DEPUTY CHIEF AL NELDER. "THE SEX DETAIL IS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM CHIEF CAHILL TO MAKE ARRESTS ONLY WHERE THERE IS EVIDENCE OF OVERT ACTS."

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SHAKEUP OF THE SEX DETAIL AND THE DRIVE AGAINST HOMOSEXUALS HAD BEEN WITHHELD UNTIL THE LAST OF THE CASES INVOLVING PAYOFFS FROM BARS FREQUENTED BY HOMOSEXUALS WAS DISPOSED OF "SO AS NOT TO PREJUDICE ANY OF THE THEN PENDING CASES."

* * * * *

ANN BANNON IS AT WORK ON THE STORY OF BEEBO BRINKER WHICH SHOULD BE PUBLISHED IN LATE SPRING OR EARLY SUMMER OF 1961.

SAYS THE AUTHOR, "INCIDENTALLY, TO AVOID CONFUSION WITH BEEBO, I MIGHT MENTION THAT MY NOVEL, THE MARRIAGE, IS COMING OUT IN JANUARY, AND IS ON A DIFFERENT THEME THAN LESBIANISM. NO, I'M

NOT DESERTING THE CAUSE, AND ACTUALLY, LAURA AND JACK MANN, CENTRAL CHARACTERS FROM THE PRECEDING BOOKS, FIGURE LARGELY IN THIS ONE. BUT READERS LOOKING FOR BEEBO WON'T FIND HER IN THIS BOOK."

* * * * *

REVOCATION OF THE LICENSE OF THE HANDLEBAR IN SAN FRANCISCO WAS UPHELD BY THE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL APPEALS BOARD BECAUSE THE PREMISES HAD "BECOME INFESTED WITH HOMOSEXUALS EXHIBITING THEIR HOMOSEXUALITY" AND WAS A DISORDERLY HOUSE.

* * * * *

IN CINCINNATTI, OHIO, IN SEPTEMBER, ONE OF ITS COVETED AWARDS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION WAS PRESENTED BY THE PROSPEROS TO REVEREND ROBERT W. WOOD, PASTOR OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, SPRING VALLEY, NEW YORK, FOR HIS BOOK, CHRIST AND THE HOMOSEXUAL.

"WE FEEL HIS CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY IS CERTAINLY WORTHY OF RECOGNITION. WE KNOW YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR HIS COURAGE AND PENETRATING RESEARCH. ... IN THE BROAD FIELD OF EDUCATION, OUR EFFORTS, LIKE YOURS, ARE TO CREATE IN SOCIETY THE EDUCATIVE EXPERIENCE TO INCLUDE UNDERSTANDING FOR ALL AND THUS EXCLUDE NO ONE," WRITES NORMA KELLER OF THE PROSPEROS.

* * * * *

A COMPLETE DEPARTURE FROM THE PROGRAM FORMATS OF THE PREVIOUS MID-WINTER INSTITUTES, ONE ANNOUNCES THAT THE MEETING HELD THE LAST WEEK END OF JANUARY IN 1961 WILL BE SOMETHING LIKE A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION TO DRAW UP A HOMOSEXUAL BILL OF RIGHTS.

THE INSTITUTE WILL TACKLE SUCH QUESTIONS AS: DO HOMOSEXUALS HAVE A RIGHT TO CONGREGATE IN A PUBLIC PLACE? ARE PRESENT REPRESSIVE SEX LAWS UNCONSTITUTIONAL? HOW MUCH SEXUAL FREEDOM DO WE REALLY WANT? DO ENGLAND'S WOLFENDEN RECOMMENDATIONS GO FAR ENOUGH? SHOULD HOMOSEXUALS BE TAXED FOR THE COSTS OF HETEROSEXUALS' CHILDREN? SHOULD HOMOSEXUALS HAVE THE RIGHT TO "SWISH"? SHOULD "HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE" BE LEGALLY RECOGNIZED? HOW MUCH DISCRIMINATION DO HOMOSEXUALS SUFFER? SHOULD POLICE POWERS BE CURBED? ARE HOMOSEXUALS REALLY "SECURITY RISKS"? ARE THEY UNFIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE? HOW OUGHT THE HOMOSEXUAL PURSUE HIS RIGHTS?

BOOKS

THE FIRST FREEDOM
Edited by Robert B. Downs
American Library Association, Chicago, 1960. $8.50

"Liberty and justice in the world of books and reading" is the subtitle of this anthology on censorship published by the American Library Association. It is a collection of the most notable and significant writings in the past 50 years by American and British authors on the subject of censorship.

As would be expected, a great deal of the book is devoted to damning the unjust censorship of books dealing with sex (normal and otherwise), politics, religion and similar issues. There is a history of the attempts to ban homosexual literature such as THE WELL OF LONELINESS, WOMEN'S BARRACKS, and the technical works of Havelock Ellis.

The complete 469-page volume is devoted to the problems of overcoming unjust censorship in literature. It should be a must for people concerned with freedom.

- Gene Damon

UNDERSTANDING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY
By Lee R. Steiner
Chilton Company, Philadelphia, 1960. $3.95

In the foreword to this book Jacques M. May, M. D., active in the field of mentally ill and atypical children, makes the comment that Mrs. Steiner has written a book of great courage and honesty. A certified psychologist, psychoanalyst, consultant in personal problems, and holder of advanced degrees from several universities, the author has also trained and supervised many professional staff members of various correctional institutions in Illinois. Therefore, when Mrs. Steiner states that the easy blaming of parents is just a way "to take the onus of our ignorance and thrust it on the backs of the parents," Dr. May calls this courageous writing -

and so it is. And with all her qualifications she is not afraid, in this day and age of psychoanalytic fad-ism, to state, "We don't know."

This is not a cold, clinical collection of case histories. Lee Steiner shows rare warmth and understanding, and no more so than in Chapter 7, "What Is a Sex Delinquent?" Although she admits, to her credit, that what is known about homosexuality is meager, she takes pains to evaluate the cases presented in this chapter in a scrupulously objective, but empathetic, manner. And, though she states at one point that it is her clinical observation that "most homosexuals would prefer to be heterosexual," she is also honest enough to remark that "We (sic) have no really validated data to show that homosexuality in itself is either abnormal or harmful. We don't know the meaning of homosexuality either genetically or psychiatrically." In the same vein Mrs. Steiner writes that she does not consider homosexuality a perversion and as a scientist does not know any valid source on which to draw for such a conclusion. On the other hand, it is only fair to note that while able to make the above statements, she also remarked, in discussing one of the cases presented, that if the boy were her own she would make every possible attempt to steer him in the direction of heterosexuality.

Throughout this chapter, as well as others, the inadequacies and inequalities of existing laws governing sexual delinquents are shockingly apparent. Mrs. Steiner pulls no punches in this area; nor does she ignore the fact that those most concerned with administering these laws fairly and with understanding - the judges, hearing officers, probation officers, social workers, etc. - are often abysmally ignorant of the most basic non-legal and/or psychological facts concerning the individuals involved, especially where homosexuality is concerned. At most, the probation officer has made some attempt at an "environmental" study of the assumption that somehow the home life of the delinquent is at fault. This is not always the case, needless to say.

The author explores various types of homosexual delinquents and the handling (or mis-handling) of their cases. Her observations are sharp, and shine a glaring light

on our present systems for handling juvenile cases in general. It is well to note, too, that in her criticism Mrs. Steiner does not spare her own profession.

While this review has been primarily concerned with one chapter, it is important to remember that the author maintains this vein of objective, professional self-criticism throughout the book. There is an impressive and eye-opening approach to the juvenile delinquency problem, told in a most refreshing, un-pedantic manner. In fact, it is downright shocking in some aspects - and should be required reading for every educator, juvenile court judge, and PARENT.

- Patty Patterson

By Lennox Strong

In June, 1865 at Ross House, County Galway, Ireland, Violet Florence Martin was born. A girl of many contrasts, she was fragile and nearsighted, yet an able hunter and sportswoman. In 1886, at the age of 21 she first met her second cousin, Edith Anna Oenone Somerville. There were no reticences between them from the beginning. Dr. Somerville was 25 years old, already a noted illustrator and artist. Violet Martin became her model and lifelong companion. Both were highly educated and unusually talented women from the innermost circle of Anglo-Irish society. Dr. Somerville was also a famous fox hunter, the first feminine M.F.H. in 1903.

Their interests were primarily literary and in 1889 they published their first joint novel, AN IRISH COUSIN. This was soon followed by other works of fiction and memoirs, over two dozen in all. Their literary ventures were published under the joint name Somerville & Ross, this last half name coming from Violet Martin's personal pseudonym of Martin Ross.

In 1898 Violet Martin was thrown from a horse and severely injured. This ended the more active lives of both women.

They had up to this time travelled extensively, living for months at a time in Paris. Several years of partial invalidism were faced by Violet Martin as a result of her accident, but the joint household flourished and continued to produce literary works. Sadly Violet Martin died in 1915 at the age of fifty.

After her death Dr. Somerville wrote IRISH MEMORIES in honor of their life together. The extreme importance their relationship played in their lives and works is best expressed by Dr. Somerville's own words describing their first meeting: "It was the hinge of my life, the place where my fate, and hers, turned over." Dr. Somerville lived to be very old, dying in 1949. She continued to write, but published all of her subsequent books under the name, "Somerville and Ross." Long after the death of Violet Martin, Dr. Somerville wrote: "In whatever, during these later years, I have written, I have known her help and have thankfully received her inspiration. She has gone, but our collaberation has not ended."

Bibliography:
Twentieth Century Authors edited by Stanley J. Kunitz, H. W. Wilson Co., 1942
First Supplement to above, 1955

* * * * *

Credit for the cartoon in the November, 1960 issue of THE LADDER - "I'm very self-conscious. I often feel that people are laughing at me." - goes to DOMINO.

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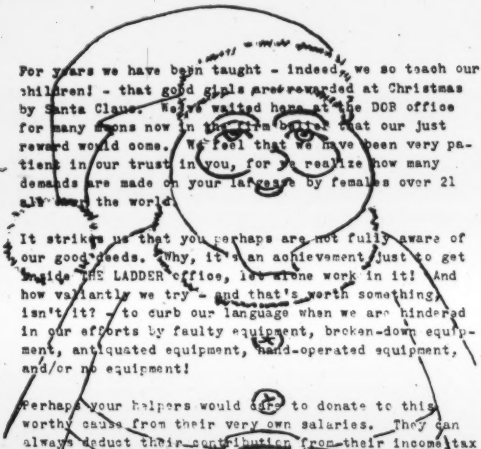

For years we have been taught - indeed, we so teach our children! - that good girls are rewarded at Christmas by Santa Claus. We've waited here at the DOB office for many moons now in the firm belief that our just reward would come. We feel that we have been very patient in our trust in you, for we realize how many demands are made on your largesse by females over 21 all over the world.

It strikes us that you perhaps are not fully aware of our good deeds. Why, it's an achievement just to get inside THE LADDER office, let alone work in it! And how valiantly we try - and that's worth something, isn't it? - to curb our language when we are hindered in our efforts by faulty equipment, broken-down equipment, antiquated equipment, hand-operated equipment, and/or no equipment!

Perhaps your helpers would care to donate to this worthy cause from their very own salaries. They can always deduct their contribution from their income tax out there in Santaland. (Point: despite what you may hear to the contrary, most of our gals do pay taxes.) We offer this suggestion to be used if all your goodies really are spoken for already. A mere dollar from each one of your helpers would buy - oh, golly, the thought is overwhelming! We on THE LADDER staff can hardly conceive of a life with decent tools for workin'.

If <u>you</u> can't help us in our hour of need, Santa, where can we turn?

Holiday Greetings

THE LADDER STAFF

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